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RURAL DISTRICT OF SOLIHULL.

ANNUAL REPORT

ON THE

HEALTH OF THE DISTRICT,

FOR THE YEAR 1925,

BY

H. GIBBONS WARD, M.D., D.P.H.,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

OF THE

Warwickshire Combined Districts.

Leamington :

A. TOMES, 46, BEDFORD STREET.

1926.



14, YORK ROAD,

LEAMINGTON SPA,

May, 1926.

To the Solihull Rural District Council.

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present to you the Report for the year 1925, relating to the health of the District.

Incorporated in the Report, as required by the Ministry of Health, is a survey of conditions during the past five years. As a record, even if an imperfect one, of health conditions in the District, it may be of some interest.

I would wish to express my thanks to the Members of the Council for their kindness and consideration, and also to my colleagues for their ready help at all times.

The preparation of the present Report has entailed special work on the part of Mr. Chard, which I acknowledge with many thanks.

I am, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

H. GIBBONS WARD,

Medical Officer of Health.



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Solihull Rural District.

1. GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area (Acres)	41,807
Population (1925)	21,940
„ (Census, 1921)	20,840
Number of Inhabited Houses (1921)	4,786
Number of Families or Separate Occupiers (1921)	4,964
Rateable Value	£182,063
Sum represented by a penny rate	£637

2. EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR.

		Total.	M.	F.		
Births	{ Legitimate	318	164	154	} Birth Rate	15.3
	{ Illegitimate	17	10	7		
Deaths ...	...	213	115	98	Death Rate	9.7
Factor for Correction of Death Rate for Age and Sex						
Distribution ...	...	...	...	...	...	.852
Corrected Death Rate	...	...	...	...	...	8.2
Number of Women dying in, or in consequence of, child-birth :—						
	From Sepsis	...	...	...	...	1
	„ other causes	...	...	...	...	2
Deaths of Infants under one year of age per 1,000 births :—						
Legitimate, 63 ; Illegitimate, — ; total, 63.						
Deaths from Measles (all ages)	...	...	...	...	...	—
„ „ Whooping Cough (all ages)	...	...	...	...	...	—
„ „ Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)	...	...	...	...	...	—

VITAL STATISTICS.

Population.—The estimate of the Registrar-General for 1925 is 21,940. This is an increase of 906 since the Census of 1921.

The “Natural Increase,” *i.e.*, the excess of births over deaths, was 122.

Birth-Rate.—There were 335 births, giving a birth-rate of 15.3 per 1,000. In 1924 the respective figures were 319 and 14.8.

Death-Rate.—There were 213 deaths, giving a death-rate of 9.7 per 1,000. In 1924 the respective figures were 225 and 10.5.

A detailed analysis of the causes of death is given in Table IV. Of the deaths, 13 were due to Influenza, 31 to Cancer, 15 to Apoplexy, 29 to Heart Disease, 8 to Bronchitis, 11 to Kidney Disease, and 7 to Violence.

With regard to Cancer the deaths for the past 13 years are as follows :—1913, 22 ; 1914, 14 ; 1915, 20 ; 1916, 26 ; 1917, 20 ; 1918, 23 ; 1919, 28 ; 1920, 27 ; 1921, 39 ; 1922, 24 ; 1923, 24 ; 1924, 27 ; 1925, 31.

Infantile Mortality.—21 deaths of children under one year were registered, giving an Infantile Mortality Rate of 63. This compares unfavourably with the figures for 1924, which were 9 and 28.

Amount of Poor Law Relief.—

Indoor	...	...	...	10d. in the £.
Outdoor	...	...	...	3 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. „
Lunatics	...	...	...	4 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. „
				—
				1/6 „
				—

The total amount levied after the deduction of various miscellaneous receipts, is 1/2 $\frac{1}{2}$ in the £.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

Water Supply.—The mains of the City of Birmingham Water Department are available for practically the whole of the populous parts of Solihull, Shirley, and Olton, whilst Knowle and Temple Balsall also receive the Birmingham supply through the mains of the Coventry Corporation, who purchased the undertaking of the North Warwickshire Water Company. In all 2,214 houses are so supplied, or nearly one half of the houses in the district. This number is constantly increasing, and fresh mains have been laid in many roads during the past five years to keep pace with the building operations.

Private wells of the usual shallow type are the source of supply for the rest of the area, and these are constantly receiving the attention of the Sanitary Inspector.

The number of new houses with regard to which occupation certificates have been granted during the year under the Public Health (Water) Act with respect to water supplies from private wells was 98.

Further particulars are given in the Report of the Sanitary Inspector appended.

Drainage and Sewerage.—Conditions remain the same as in previous Reports.

Naturally, building has entailed considerable extension of sewers, especially in Knowle and Dorridge.

The Sewage Treatment Schemes are as follows :—

- (1) Solihull Blossomfield, and Shirley : Sewage Farm, Barston.
- (2) Solihull Village : Sewage Farm, Catherine-de-Barnes.
- (3) Olton : Olton Sewage Farm

Closet Accommodation.—About four-fifths of the Closets are water flushed. There are very few Privies in use in the District—mostly pails.

During the past five years 13 pails have been converted into water closets, and 27 privies have been converted into pail closets. These figures indicate that no widespread policy of demanding extensive alterations is being adopted, but that the work is none the less being carried out.

Scavenging.—Schemes are and have been for the past five years in operation in Solihull, Olton, and Shirley, also in Tanworth village.

The ashes and refuse are removed to tips, and most of the night-soil to the various sewage outfalls.

The amount and character of refuse from a semi-urban district renders the prevention of nuisance from tips difficult, especially as good sites for tips are hard to obtain.

The regular emptying of dumb-wells continues to be a serious problem.

Most of the new properties erected are fitted with a water-carriage system, so that the work increases rather than diminishes.

The Dennis Motor Cess-pool Emptier has continued to do very good work, and has certainly justified the outlay necessary ; there have been many fewer complaints. Another machine has now been purchased, so it is hoped that conditions will continue to improve.

SANITARY INSPECTIONS OF THE DISTRICT.—The Table appended to the Sanitary Inspector's Report gives a summary of his inspections, and in his Report will be found full details on this matter.

SCHOOLS.—The elementary schools of the District have been inspected as occasion arose.

In December a letter was sent to the Director of Education in respect to the conditions obtaining at the Hockley Heath Infant School, and suggesting that these conditions were unsatisfactory. A reply was received during January, 1926, stating that the Sites and Building Committee did not see their way to take any action.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

(a) *Milk Supply*.—Generally speaking the quality of the Milk Supply in the District would appear to be good, though I have no actual figures as the actual sampling is for the most part done by the Officials of the County Council. Cleanliness has been much stressed by a special Committee which was appointed at the commencement of the present year, and it was then stated by one of the members who has special knowledge on this subject, that both the Farmers' Union and the County Agricultural Committee were giving special instruction in this matter.

At the end of the year 1925, there were on the Register, Cowkeepers 90, Cowkeepers and Retailers 60, Retailers 26, and Milkshops 6.

There were no refusals to register, and no registrations were revoked.

No licenses for the sale of milk under Special Designations have been granted.

(b) *Meat*.—It is realised by the Council that the inspection of all meat at the time of slaughter is impossible; the area is large, and one Inspector cannot possibly do it. However, each slaughter-house is visited weekly at the registered hour of slaughtering, if possible, and visits are paid at other times. It is difficult to see how this arrangement can be improved upon under present conditions, even if another Inspector were appointed, principally for the purpose, some of his days, that is those specially favoured by the trade for slaughtering, would be more than crowded with visits, since the satisfactory inspection of meat is not a process which can be carried out hurriedly, and the premises are widely separated in most cases.

Condemned meat is disposed of either (1) by sending to Birmingham, where it is dealt with by a special department, or (2) by burial under suitable conditions and supervision.

The shopkeepers have all come into line with reference to keeping shop windows closed, and there are no Stalls in use in the District.

Slaughterhouses in Use.

	1920.	Jan., 1925.	Dec., 1925.
Registered ...	10	10	10
Licensed ...	7	7	7

Dairies, Cowsheds, Milkshops, Bakehouses, Slaughterhouses, etc., are referred to in the Sanitary Inspector's Report, where information is also given as to food condemned and Food samples taken.

3. PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Incidence of Commoner Infectious Diseases since 1921.

	Diphtheria.	Scarlet Fever.	Enteric Fever.	Pneumonia.	Encephalitis Lethargica.	Puerperal Fever.
1921 ...	13	34	1	2	5	1
1922 ...	15	38	—	34	—	2
1923 ...	9	31	2	10	—	1
1924 ...	3	48	—	27	4	—
1925 ...	15	22	—	22	2	—

Reference to Table III. will give the age distribution of the cases notified in 1925.

Smallpox.—There have been no cases during the past five years, but of course it has been essential on occasion to keep under observation those who have been in contact with cases in other districts; this has, of course, entailed considerable work and travelling.

Having regard to the neglect of vaccination, which still remains the primary and most easily attained protection against Smallpox, and the occurrence of cases in districts comparatively near, it has, of course, been necessary to make arrangements for the rapid isolation of any cases which may occur. The Smallpox Hospital of the Joint Board is available any time at two hours' notice, in fact was so occupied last year by a case from the Meriden district; this promptitude is to a large extent due to the organisation perfected by Mr. Chard, who is Steward for the Hospital.

Diphtheria.—The number of cases of this disease notified during 1925, viz., 15, was rather greater than that during the two previous years. Of these, 5 occurred in Tanworth, and 2 each in Shirley, Olton, and Solihull.

There were no deaths due to this disease.

The five cases referred to above occurred in one household, and this accounts to a great extent for the increase in 1925.

In 1921 there was a small epidemic of 7 cases in Hockley Heath, with 2 deaths, and in 1922, 7 cases occurred in the Shirley area, with one death.

As far as I am aware, the SCHICK TEST has not been used in the District.

Anti-toxin may be obtained by Doctors for their poorer patients at the cost of the Council from the following Chemists : W. K. Winfield, High Street, Solihull ; J. T. Metcalfe, Stratford Road, Shirley ; A. H. Windridge, Ltd., The Square, Knowle ; T. J. Rice, Dorridge.

Scarlet Fever.—The number of cases of Scarlet Fever was, during 1925, considerably less than the average for the past five years, viz., 22. Of these, 8 cases occurred at Hockley Heath, where there were 2 cases in one house, 4 at Shirley, where 2 cases occurred in each of two houses, 3 at Olton, and 2 at Solihull.

There were no deaths from this disease.

In 1924 there were considerably more than the average number of cases, and this was due in the main to a somewhat widespread epidemic in Solihull, Olton, Shirley and Knowle ; in 1922 also Solihull and Shirley had a considerable number of cases.

I have no record of any use having been made of the DICK TEST, or of any method of artificial immunisation.

Enteric Fever.—No cases were notified during 1925, and the total number of cases during the past five years number 3. This result must in great part be ascribed to the large number of houses supplied from the public water mains.

Puerperal Fever.—No cases were notified during 1925, and the total for the past five years is 4. I think that there is little doubt that some cases may have occurred, but have been sent into Birmingham for hospital treatment, and thus may have escaped notification. There was one death registered as due to this condition.

Pneumonia.—22 cases were notified, and there were 7 deaths. There has been some difficulty in ensuring the notification of cases of Pneumonia in this district, in fact in 1921 only 2 cases were notified. Acting on the instruction of the Council, letters were sent to all the practitioners in the area calling attention to this matter, and a considerable improvement was noted. In any case where death is registered as due to Pneumonia, and no previous notification has been received, a letter is addressed to the Doctor responsible, and this has had a good effect.

Ophthalmia Neonatorum.—1 case was notified from Solihull, and the notification was promptly transmitted to the County Medical Officer for any action he might see fit to take.

Encephalitis Lethargica.—2 cases were notified; no deaths. In 1921 and 1924 there were 5 and 4 cases respectively, with 2 deaths in each case.

Public Health (Smallpox Prevention) Regulations, 1917.—No action was taken or required.

Laboratory Work.—See section 6.

Non-notifiable Infectious Diseases.—The following list of school closures indicates fairly accurately the incidence of these diseases :—

Solihull Girls, from Feb. 16th to Mar. 1st. Influenza.
 Barston, from Mar. 1st to Mar. 8th. Influenza.
 Hockley Heath, from Mar. 9th to Mar. 14th. Chickenpox.
 Shirley, from Mar. 10th to Mar. 23rd. Whooping Cough.
 Packwood, from Mar. 14th to April 3rd. Whooping Cough.
 Hockley Heath, from Mar. 14th to Mar. 20th. Influenza.
 Hockley Heath, from Mar. 23rd to Easter Holidays. Mumps.
 Lapworth, from Mar. 23rd to Easter Holidays. Influenza.
 Catherine-de-Barnes, from Mar. 23rd to Easter Holidays.
 Whooping Cough.
 Knowle Infants, from Mar. 23rd to Easter Holidays. Chickenpox.
 Solihull R.C., from Mar. 23rd to Mar. 30th. Influenza.
 Forshaw Heath, from Mar. 25th to Easter Holidays. Influenza.
 Salter Street, Tanworth, from April 4th to Easter Holidays.
 Influenza.
 Shirley Infants, from April 4th to Easter Holidays. Whooping Cough.
 Baddesley Clinton, from April 21st to May 5th. Measles.
 Bentley Heath, from April 27th to May 11th. Measles.
 Shirley Infants, from July 7th to Summer Holidays. Measles.
 Balsall Street Infants, from July 28th to Summer Holidays.
 Measles.
 Olton, from Dec. 12th to Xmas Holidays. Chickenpox.

Influenza was prevalent in some parts of the District chiefly during the first 3 months of the year, and there were 13 deaths registered as due to this disease.

The school teachers of the District follow the rules laid down by the County Council with regard to exclusion of members of infected families from school, which rules are based upon the Ministry of Health's Memorandum of 1925. Notifications of all infectious disease occurring among school children are duly forwarded to me from the schools.

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER TUBERCULOSIS.

AGE—PERIODS			NEW CASES.						DEATHS.					
			Pulmonary.			Non-Pulmonary.			Pulmonary.			Non-Pulmonary.		
			M.	F.	...	M.	F.	...	M.	F.	...	M.	F.	...
0	—	—	...	—	—	...	—	—	...	—	—
1	—	—	...	—	—	...	—	—	...	—	—
5	—	—	...	—	—	...	—	—	...	—	—
10	—	1	...	—	—	...	—	—	...	—	—
15	1	1	...	—	—	...	—	1	...	—	—
20	1	—	...	—	—	...	1	1	...	—	—
25	2	—	...	—	2	...	2	—	...	—	1
35	5	5	...	—	2	...	3	3	...	—	—
45	4	4	...	—	—	...	2	—	...	—	—
55	—	—	...	—	—	...	—	—	...	—	—
65 and upwards			...	—	1	...	—	—	...	—	1	...	—	1
TOTALS			...	13	12	...	—	4	...	8	6	...	—	2

29 new cases of tuberculosis were notified during the year, 25 being of Pulmonary Tuberculosis and 4 of other forms. Table III. gives the areas of occurrence.

The following table shows the notifications and deaths for each year since 1912, when notification was first made compulsory :—

	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918
Cases	58	62	27	36	27	19	63
Deaths	17	22	21	23	19	13	22
	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925
Cases	41	24	31	21	28	28	29
Deaths	19	10	11	11	7	18	16

It is again noted that we are constantly receiving information of the migration of cases of Tuberculosis out of the City of Birmingham into this district, with a view to their improvement in health. This, of course, affects our statistics considerably. There were 3 such cases during 1925.

10 cases were admitted to Sanatorium during the year, and 9 were discharged after treatment.

16 deaths were due to tuberculosis, 14 of which occurred from pulmonary and 2 from other forms. The visiting of the cases has been carried out by the County Health Visitor. Any special points discovered by her visits have been reported, and the necessary steps taken.

Disinfectants and sputum bottles are supplied free by the Council for cases where they are desirable. After deaths from tuberculosis, and after removals of patients when known, disinfection is carried out by the Inspector, and the bedding, etc., either removed to the Isolation Hospital for disinfection, or burnt. In certain cases where bedding is burnt, compensation is given.

INFANT MORTALITY.

As mentioned previously, the Infant Mortality amounts to 21 deaths, or 63 per 1,000 births. Of these 21, 9 were due to conditions present before birth, and 1 to infantile diarrhoea.

There were 17 illegitimate births, but no death amongst these children.

Under the Notification of Births Act, 313 births were notified by doctor, nurse, or relative, out of the 335 which were registered as occurring in the District.

Weekly lists of births notified have been regularly forwarded by me to the County Medical Officer, and a large number of infants have been visited by the County Health Visitor, whose work has undoubtedly been of great value in producing the comparatively low Infantile Mortality now shewn.

4. CAUSES OF SICKNESS.

There is nothing special to note here.

5. SUMMARY (FOR REFERENCE) OF NURSING ARRANGEMENTS, HOSPITALS, AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS AVAILABLE FOR

THE DISTRICT.

Professional Nursing in the Home.—None provided by the Local Authority.

Hospitals Provided or subsidised by Local Authority.—(1) Tuberculosis, None. (2) Maternity, None. (3) Children, None. (4) Fever, Solihull and Meriden Joint Hospital, Catherine-de-Barnes, also Joint Smallpox Hospital, Marston Green.

Ambulance Facilities.—An ambulance is maintained by the Council at a local garage. It is available for all local non-infectious cases on application to Mr. Bayliss, The Garage, Warwick Road, Solihull.

6. LABORATORY WORK.

The following table shows the extent to which the County scheme for the free bacteriological examinations by Birmingham University has been utilised :—

	Positive.		Negative.		Total.
Diphtheria ...	18	...	78	...	96
Enteric Fever...	0	...	6	...	6
Pulmonary Tu-berculosis	7	...	24	...	31
	—		—		—
	25	...	108	...	133

7. SANITARY ADMINISTRATION OF THE DISTRICT.

A summary of the work done is given in Table I.

Acts Adopted, 1923.

Provisions of Part IV. of the P.H. Act.	} Whole of District.
A. Act, 1907 (relating to Infectious Diseases).	

Acts Adopted, 1924.

Provisions of Sec. 146 of P.H.A., 1927,	} Solihull Parish.
relating to Public Walks and Pleasure Grounds.	

Few Statutory notices were issued, and it is very satisfactory that so much work has been accomplished as the result of informal communications from the Inspector.

8. PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF.

This consists of a Sanitary Inspector and a Surveyor ; both are full-time officials. The Sanitary Inspector is the official designated by the Housing (Inspection of Districts) Regulations. It may be observed here that the work laid on the Inspector is constantly increasing, and should Orders and Regulations continue to be issued at the same rate as in 1925, it will be essential to appoint another Inspector.

9. HOUSING.

Inspection has been continued, and 102 houses have been re-inspected. There are now 1,130 houses on which particulars are registered.

I. *General Housing Conditions*.—(1) Solihull Rural District is in part suburban in character, mainly in the Parish of Solihull, which includes Olton and Shirley; Knowle also is an area in which there has been much building. All these areas, which abut on the City of Birmingham, are bound to have their housing difficulties increased by the prevailing shortage in the City, the problem of housing in Birmingham is a vast one, and cannot as yet have been affected greatly even by the present huge housing commitments of the City Council.

The result has been that apart from the natural desire of the workers in the City to live in the country, there are many others who cannot find accommodation where they work, and therefore have to go further afield.

The effect on the district has been two-fold. (a) The town workers have increased the amount of overcrowding, by the fact that they are willing to pay high rents for rooms, rents which, in these days, of high prices, cannot help but be tempting to householders. (b) They have come into the district and erected dwellings of wood and corrugated iron, and in some cases disused furniture vans, which are contrary to the bye-laws; seeming to be labouring under the delusion that they can live how and where they like in a Rural District. This idea has unfortunately been fostered in some instances by those who wished to sell plots of land. In many of these cases the Council has had to take action in the Court, and has been criticised for this. One can only believe that the critics are totally unaware of the position, and do not know the difficulties which beset any Authority in whose district such a colony of temporary dwellings exists; water supply and sewage disposal are matters which cannot be dealt with in a day or two, which would seem to be the time occupied by some people in erecting their dwellings; and there is little doubt on whom the blame would be laid in the event of the occurrence of an epidemic of Enteric Fever. The Council have insisted, and rightly so, that plans must be submitted for these buildings, so that the necessary supervision may be exercised over their construction, etc. Though there must be, and have been, individual cases where sympathy needs to

be extended on account of ignorance, yet in many instances it would appear that efforts have been made to erect the dwellings in odd corners as quickly as possible, with a view to their escaping the eyes of the officials responsible for their supervision.

In connection with the housing question, it is interesting to note that the Census of 1921 shows that of the total population of the district of that time, viz., 20,840, the number who worked out of the district was 3,702.

(2) It is difficult, if not impossible, to assess the actual shortage of houses in the district, but as the result of the comprehensive survey made in 1919 by my predecessor, Dr. Tangye, the Council then estimated that 350 working class houses were required. It would appear that the requirements of the District have not decreased to a very large extent, because the building which has taken place since that time, though of great value, has been mostly of the larger type of house. This position was recognised by the Council in 1924, when it was decided to build some houses ; under this scheme 6 houses have been built at Solihull on the Hermitage site, 8 at Hockley Heath, and 4 at Balsall. It must be obvious, however, that this number can have had very little effect on the general shortage, and the Council has plans in hand for the erection of a further 76 houses.

In another way the Council has endeavoured to meet the position by encouraging private enterprise and ownership, and had up to the end of 1925 advanced money on mortgage to the owners of 104 houses, besides granting the subsidy in the case of 351 others. The difficulty is that the man with a comparatively small weekly wage, and perhaps a large family, cannot hope to avail himself of these methods of becoming the owner of his house, and it is the house which can be let for a rental which is so necessary in this district, as in others.

II. *Overcrowding*.—12 cases were reported in 1925, and three informal notices were served ; it is important to note, however, that only the most serious instances are reported, and that most of the cases never come to our notice at all, owing to the fact that tenants are only too glad to have a house at all, irrespective of its condition and size.

In the absence of alternative accommodation, needless to say, no special action has been taken in the above cases.

III. *Fitness of Houses*.—The Housing Survey of 1919, made by Dr. Tangye, shewed that there were then 67 houses

which should be closed, and a further 117 which were seriously defective. A very considerable amount of work has been done since that time with a view to the improvement of housing conditions. In reference to the first group of 67 houses, one has on record that 8 have been closed either voluntarily or on representation to the Council, ; the result is, of course, extremely unsatisfactory, but it is difficult to see how it could be otherwise. An increasing population, unaccompanied by the provision of working class houses, very effectually prevents the closure and demolition of existing houses, even if they be unfit for habitation as measured by normal standards. Again, the large and increasing amount of building that has been going on in the provision of better class houses has naturally drained away the labour necessary for repairs, and has increased the difficulty of getting work done, even if the owners are willing. Under all these circumstances, I am of the opinion that conditions have improved, and are continuing to improve, but can only reach a certain stage, beyond which, only the provision of further housing accommodation of the type needed, will enable the necessary action to be taken with respect to houses which are grossly unfit for habitation.

The apportionment of blame as to unfitness as between tenant and owner is again somewhat difficult, but generally speaking the defects have been found to be structural, and as such can be laid to the charge of the owner, though it has to be remembered that the cost of repairs has increased out of all proportion to the increase in rentals, and it is difficult to see how the owner can see any return on the money expended for a long time to come.

Undoubtedly in a few cases the tenants are dirty and shiftless, and any work of cleansing or decoration is promptly rendered useless by them or their children.

Action taken for the improvement of housing conditions is set out in detail in the following table, and also in Table I.

Bye-Laws.—These have been recently remodelled, sanctioned by the Ministry, and are now in operation.

Town Planning.—No scheme has so far been adopted.

The following Tables give particulars as to the houses inspected. This matter is further referred to in the Report of the Sanitary Inspector :—

HOUSING CONDITIONS.

STATISTICS.

Year ended 31st December, 1925.

1.—NEW HOUSES.

Number of new houses erected during the year :—

(a) Total	....	....	....	....	....	....	285
(b) With State assistance under the Housing Acts, 1919, 1923 or 1924 :							
(i.) By the Local Authority						{ 20 occupied. 76 commenced.	
(ii.) By other Bodies or Persons	....	....					119

104 houses were certified for loans by the Council on mortgage.

2.—UNFIT DWELLING-HOUSES.

I.—INSPECTION.

(1) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	...	270
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910	... ..	102
(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	... ..	6
(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	...	37

II.—REMEDY OF DEFECTS WITHOUT SERVICE OF FORMAL NOTICE.

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers	18
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III.—ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS.

A. <i>Proceedings under Section 3 of the Housing Act, 1925.</i>		
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	... ..	3
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after formal notice—		
(a) by owners...	... ..	—
(b) by Local Authority in default of owners		—
(3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close	...	—

B. *Proceedings under Public Health Acts.*

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	—
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied :—	
(a) by owners	—
(b) by Local Authority in default of owners	—

C. *Proceedings under Sections 11, 14 and 15 of the Housing Act, 1925.*

(1) Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders	3
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made... ..	3
(3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling-houses having been rendered fit	—
(4) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	—
(5) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders	—

REPORT OF SANITARY INSPECTOR.

TO THE SOLIHULL RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present my Fifteenth Annual Report for the year ending December 31st, 1925, giving particulars of the work carried out under your instructions in the Public Health Department.

The increased work thrown on this Department during the past few years by new legislation, and by the natural growth of the District, will necessitate in the very near future additional help.

Property-owners have generally complied with the requirements as ordered, an interview in most cases having been arranged.

Three Statutory Notices have been served, but were not complied with at the close of the year.

The Nuisances abated during the year amounted to 711.

Particulars are given in Table I. attached.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

During the year I have visited 39 dwelling-houses where infectious diseases have been notified.

I have also supervised the removal of 16 cases of scarlet fever, and 7 of diphtheria, to the Isolation Hospital.

Four Scarlet fever patients remained under treatment at the end of the year.

No patients from this District died in the Isolation Hospital.

The necessary disinfection was carried out after 18 cases of scarlet fever, 8 of diphtheria, and 12 of other diseases.

Houses in part or whole were stripped and limewashed in 27 cases.

Notice was sent to the school when the house had been disinfected, giving the date when the children could be re-admitted.

SCHOOLS.

Most of the Schools—public and private—were inspected during the year. On the whole they were found to be in a clean condition. The periodical limewashing of the out-houses has been carried out. No grave sanitary defects were found. Most of the schools obtain their water supply from wells. The schools at Solihull, Olton, Shirley and Knowle have water-flushed closets connected with the public sewer. The following schools, Baddesley Clinton, Balsall, Barston, Bentley Heath, Catherine-de-Barnes, Elmdon, Forshaw Heath, Hockley Heath, Lapworth, Packwood, Salter Street, and Tanworth-in-Arden, have earth-closets.

HOUSING.

Frequent inspections have been made of the numerous temporary dwelling-houses erected in the District during the past few years on the Mount Estate, Earlswood, Major's Green, Tythe Barn Lane, Whitlocks End, Dickens Heath, Solihull Lodge, Ilshaw Heath, and at the Robin Hood Allotments. Special attention is given to the internal condition, water supply, closet accommodation, disposal of excreta and house refuse. Some of the buildings are very crude, while others are good in many respects, the redeeming feature being the situation. Some of the temporary wooden structures which were permanently occupied during the most acute stage of the housing shortage, are now being used for week-ends only, the occupiers having found better accommodation. With constant supervision of the wooden buildings occupied in the District, I feel sure a great many will fall out of use during the next few years, but we must not lose sight of the fact that they have served a very useful purpose.

DRAINAGE AND SANITARY CONVENIENCES.

In twenty cases house drains have been entirely relaid, seven old dwelling-houses have been connected to the sewer; three pails have been converted into water closets; and five privies converted into pail closets.

An additional water closet has been provided in one case.

Of recent years frequent complaints have been made with reference to the offensive smells from the insufficient drainage at the Ladbroke Park Golf Club, Tanworth-in-Arden. I am pleased to report that during the year a new drainage system has been installed, completely removing the nuisance.

SLAUGHTER-HOUSES.

The 17 slaughter-houses in the District have been inspected on 94 occasions, chiefly while slaughtering was taking place. Two slaughter-houses were temporarily closed at the end of the year. On the whole the slaughter-houses and premises are kept in a satisfactory condition.

KNACKER YARDS.

There is no knacker yard within the Rural District.

OFFENSIVE TRADES.

There are no offensive trades established within the Rural District.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS ACTS.

There are 12 factories, 74 workshops, and 18 bakehouses on the Registers. Three bakehouses were not in use at the close of the year. Five bakehouses have been permanently closed.

DAIRIES, COWSHEDS, AND MILKSHOPS.

The number of persons on the Registers at the close of the year was 182, comprising :—Cow-keepers 90, cow-keepers and retail purveyors of milk 60, retail purveyors of milk 26, and milkshops 6.

The periodical limewashing of cowsheds has been carried out.

In seven cases additional light and ventilation has been provided. In ten cases the drainage has been improved. In fifteen cases the floors have been re-paved and channelled. In four cases the manure has been removed permanently away from the cowshed doors.

The greater number of cows in this District are turned out for a portion of each day unless it is exceptionally bad weather.

THE PUBLIC HEALTH (WATER) ACT, 1878.

Under the Public Health (Water) Act, 98 certificates have been issued for the occupation of new dwelling-houses, but this only includes houses where drinking water is derived from wells. One hundred and seventeen samples of well water have been taken and submitted to the County Analysts, 9 of which were reported to be unfit for drinking purposes. One hundred and two of the samples were taken in connection with permanent or temporary dwelling-houses in course of erection. Action was taken to improve the condition of the wells where the water was unsatisfactory, and fifty-six were protected from surface pollution and cleaned out. Nine of the old houses were connected to the Public Water Supply.

INSPECTION OF MEAT AND OTHER FOODS.

Meat, fish, and other foods have been inspected during the year, but it has not been found necessary to advise the Council to take proceedings in a single case.

By request of the butchers, I have been called in to examine meat on several occasions. The carcase of a beast with general tuberculosis, a calf with black-leg, a beast's liver with an abscess, and half a carcase of a lamb which had been worried by a dog have been voluntarily surrendered. An order was obtained from a Justice of the Peace for the destruction of the tuberculous carcase, as the owner was not the occupier of the slaughter-house in which it was slaughtered.

The Public Health (Meat) Regulations, 1924, which came into operation on the 1st day of April, 1925, have entailed increased duties. After some little difficulty, I think we may now safely say that the Regulations—generally speaking—are being complied with. The open shop window was the chief contention.

With reference to the slaughtering of pigs by farmers and cottagers in an agricultural district is somewhat of a problem, but a regular system of notification of slaughter is now working fairly satisfactorily.

The rarity of diseased meat in this District is accounted for by the fact that meat purveyors carry on a good class of trade and purchase prime animals only ; the remaining butchers obtain their meat from the wholesale meat market connected with the Birmingham Abattoir, where the carcasses have been duly inspected before being allowed to be exposed for sale.

MILK.

The quality of the milk retailed in the District appears to be good on the whole, so far as chemical standards are concerned, but there is not sufficient care taken to exclude particles of dirt. The producer, retailer, and householder are all at fault in this direction, but it is pleasing to note that a steady improvement is taking place in all directions.

FOOD AND DRUGS.

The Sale of Food and Drugs Acts are chiefly administered by the Warwickshire County Council, and I am regularly in touch with their Inspector regarding this District.

CANAL BOATS ACTS, 1877 AND 1884.

Twelve registered canal boats have been inspected ; no infringements were met with.

No cases of infectious disease occurred on any of the boats.

No canal boats are registered by this Sanitary Authority.

PETROLEUM ACTS, 1871 TO 1881.

Sixty licences were granted for the storage of petrol (or motor spirit), and ten for carbide of calcium.

There are 40 petrol pumps with underground tanks in the District.

I am, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

ALFRED H. CHARD,

Sanitary Inspector.

TABLE I.

RURAL SANITARY DISTRICT OF SOLIHULL.

SUMMARY OF SANITARY WORK DONE IN THE SANITARY INSPECTOR'S
DEPARTMENT DURING THE YEAR 1925.

				Inspections and Observations made.		Notices served.		Nuisances Abated after Notices.
						Statu- tory.	In- formal.	
Dwelling Houses and Schools—								
Foul Conditions	...	...	...	78	—	—	27	27
Structural Defects	...	...	...	172	—	—	59	114
Overcrowding	...	...	...	12	—	—	3	3
Unfit for Habitation	...	...	...	28	—	—	4	6
Lodging Houses	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	—
Dairies and Milkshops	...	...	...	39	—	—	—	4
Cow Sheds	...	...	...	171	—	—	68	138
Bakehouses, Workshops	...	...	...	32	—	—	2	2
Slaughter Houses	...	...	...	156	—	—	7	7
Canal Boats	...	...	...	12	—	—	—	—
Ashpits and Privies	...	...	...	24	—	—	15	15
Deposits of Refuse and Manure	...	...	...	58	—	—	19	19
Water-closets	...	...	...	26	—	—	10	10
House Drainage—								
Defective Traps	...	...	...	21	—	—	13	15
No Disconnection	...	...	...	15	—	—	8	8
Other Faults	...	...	...	239	—	—	119	158
Water Supply	...	...	...	178	—	—	58	69
Pigsties	...	...	...	8	—	—	2	2
Animals improperly kept	...	...	...	15	—	—	—	—
Offensive Trades	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	—
Smoke Nuisances	...	...	...	3	—	—	—	—
Other Nuisances	...	...	...	187	—	—	96	114
TOTALS ...				1,474	—	—	510	711
								No.
Seizures of Unwholesome Food (voluntarily surrendered)				...	...	...	...	4
Samples of Food taken for Analysis				...	...	...	...	1
Ditto of Food found adulterated				...	...	...	...	—
Ditto of Water taken for Analysis				...	...	...	...	117
Ditto of Water condemned as unfit for use				...	...	...	...	9

NOTE.—Where an inspection or notice embraces more than one defect, it may be enumerated separately as regards each such defect.

PRECAUTIONS AGAINST INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

Lots of Infected Bedding Stoved or Destroyed	...	...	...	26
Houses Disinfected after Infectious Disease	...	...	...	51
Schools ditto ditto ditto	...	...	...	—
Prosecutions for not Notifying Existence of Infectious Disease...	...	...	...	—
Convictions ditto ditto ditto ditto	...	...	...	—
Prosecutions for Exposure of Infected Persons or Things	...	...	...	—
Convictions ditto ditto ditto	...	...	...	—

ALFRED H. CHARD, Sanitary Inspector.

TABLE II.
SOLIHULL RURAL DISTRICT.

VITAL STATISTICS OF WHOLE DISTRICT DURING 1925 AND PREVIOUS YEARS.

YEAR.	Population estimated to Middle of each Year.	BIRTHS.		NETT DEATHS BELONGING TO THE DISTRICT.			
		Nett.		Under 1 Year of age.		At all Ages	
		Number.	Rate.	Number.	Rate per 1,000 Nett Births.	Number.	Rate
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1919	20,264	270	13.4	18	67	238	12.2
1920	20,228	387	19.1	17	44	224	11.1
1921	20,840	344	16.5	28	81	243	12.1
1922	21,040	332	15.8	20	69	217	10.3
1923	21,160	296	14.0	15	51	178	8.4
1924	21,530	319	14.8	9	28	225	10.5
1925	21,940	335	15.3	21	63	213	9.7

VITAL STATISTICS IN ENGLAND AND WALES, 1925.

We are indebted to the Registrar-General for the following statement showing the birth-rates and death-rates and the rate of infantile mortality in England and Wales, and in certain parts of the country during the year 1925.

ENGLAND AND WALES.

Birth-rate, Death-rate, and Infantile Mortality during the Year 1925 (Provisional Figures).

Annual Rate per 1,000 Living.

				Births.	Deaths.	Deaths under one year to 1,000 Births
England and Wales	...	...	...	18.3	12.2	75
105 Great Towns, including London	...	...	...	18.8	12.2	79
157 Smaller Towns	...	...	...	18.3	11.2	74
London	...	...	...	18.0	11.7	67

TABLE III.—SOLIHULL RURAL DISTRICT.
CASES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE NOTIFIED DURING THE
YEAR 1925.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE	Number of Cases notified.								Total Cases removed to Hospital.	Total Deaths.
	At all Ages.	At Ages.—Years.								
		Under 1.	1 to 5.	5 to 15.	15 to 25.	25 to 45.	45 to 65.	65 and upwards.		
Small-pox										
Plague										
Diphtheria (including Mem- branous Croup)	15	.....	5	4	3	3	.....	.....	8	.....
Erysipelas	4	1	.....	.....	.....	1	2	.....	.....	.....
Scarlet Fever	22	.....	6	10	3	2	1	.....	15	.....
Typhus Fever										
Enteric Fever										1
Pneumonia	22	1	.....	4	1	9	3	4	.....	.....
Malaria										
Dysentery										
Puerperal Fever										1
Cerebro-spinal Meningitis...										
Poliomyelitis	3	.....	1	1	1	.....			.....	.....
Encephalitis Lethargica ...	2	.....					2	.....	.....	1
Ophthalmia Neonatorum ...	1	1	.....						.....	.....
Chicken-Pox ... ..									.....	.....
Polio-Encephalitis ... ..									.....	.....
Pulmonary Tuberculosis ...	28	.....	.....	2	3	20	3	.....	.....	13
Other forms of Tuberculosis	3	.....	.....		1	2	.....	.....	.....	2
Totals	100	3	12	21	12	37	11	4	23	18

Isolation Hospitals: Solihull and Meriden Joint Small-pox Hospital (at Sheldon,
in the Meriden R.D.);
Solihull and Meriden Joint Isolation Hospital (at Catherine-de-Barnes, in the
Solihull R.D.)

TABLE IV.
SOLIHULL RURAL DISTRICT.

CAUSES OF DEATH DURING THE YEAR 1925.

CAUSES OF DEATH.	MALES.	FEMALES.
Enteric Fever		
Smallpox		
Measles		
Scarlet Fever		
Whooping Cough	2	
Diphtheria		
Influenza	6	7
Encephalitis Lethargica		
Meningococcal Meningitis		
Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	5	8
Other Tuberculous Diseases... ..	1	1
Cancer, Malignant Disease	17	14
Rheumatic Fever		
Diabetes	1	
Cerebral Hæmorrhage, etc.	6	9
Heart Disease	11	18
Arterio Sclerosis	11	3
Bronchitis	2	6
Pneumonia (all forms)	5	2
Other Respiratory Diseases	1	1
Ulcer of Stomach or Duodenum	5	3
Diarrhœa, etc. (under 2 yrs.)... ..	1	
Appendicitis and Typhlitis	1	1
Cirrhosis of Liver		
Acute and Chronic Nephritis ..	7	4
Puerperal Sepsis		1
Other Accidents and Diseases of Pregnancy and Parturition		2
Congenital Debility and Malforma- tion, Premature Birth	7	2
Suicide	1	
Other Deaths from Violence	5	1
Other Defined Diseases	20	15
Causes, ill-defined or unknown ..		
All Causes	115	98

